



News

[Feature Focus](#)

[Celebrate](#)

[Conference News](#)

[Local Church News](#)

[Lifting Up...](#)

[NEWS Archives](#)

[SEC News Resources](#)

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[Email Newsletter](#)

[GO](#)

Southeast Conference FAQ's

[Who is the SEC?](#)

[Who is the UCC?](#)

[How Do I Find a UCC Church?](#)

[What Ministries are Available?](#)

[Is Training Available?](#)

YOU ARE HERE: [HOME](#) ▶ [NEWS](#)

A Word From Tim Downs - January 2012



It's a Global Commitment

Dear Friends,

When you receive this letter, I will be in Thailand participating in our Southeast Conference Global Theological Education program. Many of you are aware that at our 2011 Annual Meeting, we voted to become a Global Mission Conference. We witness to this through partnership of the Pleasant Hill Community UCC with a church in Cuba and an ambulance sent to Honduras by the United Church of Huntsville; through our ongoing relationship with the Institute for the Study of Religion Culture and Peace of Payap University in Thailand; and through a recent trip this summer of a Southeast Conference group to the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and through the many other ways the SEC demonstrates its global commitment.



We have heard of globalization as it applies to economics. Our conference is living out the

globalization of the church through our ministry. When we speak of globalization in the context of the church, we are speaking of a different way of doing mission. Ours is not the mission of the 19th century, to promote a culturally bound Gospel to redeem the "heathen," often while functioning in cooperation with colonialists or western economic interests. It is instead a mission that is engaged in partnership with churches that we have been in ministry for up to centuries. When we go to other countries, we go at the invitation of our local partners. What ministry we bring, we bring in collaboration with them. Whether in refugee or disaster relief, or building churches, hospitals or schools, our efforts are led by local leadership. In a world where the most rapidly growing churches are in the Southern Hemisphere, we are beginning to recognize that those who were once taught by our forebears now have much to teach us. I for one look forward to being in Thailand to learn, and to listen to those of our faith and other faiths.

Peace,

Tim Downs

Timothy C. Downs

Conference Minister

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Headlines from the United Church of Christ

[UCC justice advocates applaud denial of Keystone pipeline](#)

United Church of Christ and other faith leaders opposed to Keystone XL pipeline proclaimed their support of President Obama's January 18 decision to deny a permit for construction of a 1,700-mile pipeline that would have transported heavy crude oil trapped in tar sands from Alberta, Canada to the Gulf of Mexico for refinement.



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[Conference News - January 2012](#)
[Feature Focus - January 2012](#)
[News From Our Local Churches - January 2012](#)
[Celebrations - January 2012](#)
[Lifting Up . . . January 2012](#)

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[UCC History and Polity](#)
[Southeast Conference Campaign](#)
[Steps to Planting a New Church](#)
[Global Theological Education](#)

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- Annual Meeting
- Global Theological Education
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- Seminars/Webinars

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- Bridge 4 Faith
- The Center for Progressive Renewal
- United Church of Christ
- Mission Insite
- Resource Center

EVENTS CALENDAR

January 2012						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

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